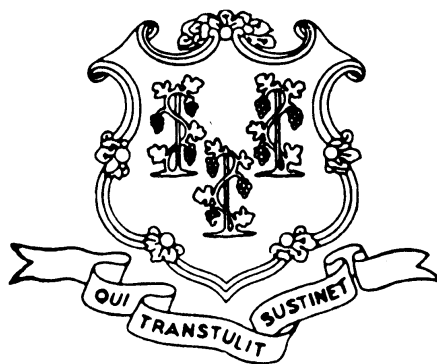


Position Statement on

**School–Family–Community  
Partnerships**



Adopted August 7, 1997

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**The State Board of Education defines school-family-community partnerships as the continuous planning, support and participation of school personnel, families and community organizations in coordinated activities and efforts at home, in the school and in the community that directly and positively affect the success of all children's learning. Each partner is viewed as an equally contributing member, maintaining a certain independence while acknowledging shared responsibility. To succeed, the partnership must be flexible and based upon mutual trust and respect. Schools must take the lead in developing and sustaining effective partnerships.**

The Connecticut State Board of Education recognizes that education is a shared responsibility throughout a student's entire educational career. Schools, families and communities all contribute to student success, and the best results come when all three work together. A comprehensive, well-planned partnership between family, school and community results in higher student achievement.

Research findings indicate school-family-community partnerships result in specific benefits for students, families and schools. Students in schools where there is a strong component of family involvement perform better than those in schools with less involvement. They have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, higher rates of homework completion and fewer placements in special education, and they stay in school longer. In fact, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which the student's family is involved in his or her education. Families also benefit; they develop a greater understanding of their role in their children's education, a sense of effectiveness, stronger social ties and a desire to continue their own education. Schools and communities benefit. Teachers report that their work becomes easier if they receive help from families, and families who are more involved have more positive views of teachers. Increased involvement also results in families feeling more ownership of their school and being more willing to support school and community initiatives.

An effective partnership offers a broad array of opportunities for schools, families and communities to interact. Not all school-family-community partnerships look the same. Successful partnerships exhibit as much variety as the local conditions that create them. Partnerships work best when they recognize and accommodate differences among families, communities and cultures.

The State Board of Education recognizes that schools must take the lead in developing and sustaining effective partnerships. In order to encourage comprehensive school-family-community partnerships, the Board recommends that schools develop programs related to the following six standards:

1. parenting – promote and support parenting skills and the family’s primary role in encouraging children's learning at each age and grade level;
2. communicating – promote clear two-way communication between the school and families about school programs and children's progress;
3. volunteering – provide appropriate training and involve families in instructional and support areas both in and out of the school;
4. learning at home – involve families in learning activities at home, including interactive homework and other curriculum-linked or enrichment activities;
5. decision making – provide opportunities for all families to develop and strengthen their leadership role in school decisions; and
6. collaborating with the community – provide coordinated access to community resources for children and families, and serve as a resource to the community.

Each member of the school-family-community partnership plays a unique and important role in contributing to success for all students. Effective strategies for each partner, derived from current research, are described below.

### A Role for Schools

Every school can develop effective strategies to involve all families in the education of their children. The State Board of Education believes that local schools and school districts should engage in specific actions to develop and sustain strong partnership programs: identify district-level goals for school-family-community partnerships; develop structures for systematically and comprehensively implementing the six standards of school-family-community partnerships; provide training and support for teachers, administrators, other staff members and parents in the areas of goals, practices and processes of partnership; monitor progress to learn which practices help schools produce the best results for students, parents, teachers, the school and community; make school facilities available for community and family activities; and contact local businesses, agencies and community organizations to develop collaborations that support school and district goals and programs.

### A Role for Families

Families can make critical contributions to student achievement by providing a home environment conducive to lifelong learning. Families can take advantage of opportunities offered by the school to become involved in activities related to the six standards of school-family-community partnerships. Families can also let the school know how they would like to contribute. Families can use and contribute to community resources and help connect other families to the school and community.

### A Role for Communities

Service organizations and agencies, religious groups, businesses and individuals can develop networks for communicating with schools and families about information and services that support family involvement in children's education. Community agencies can collaborate to provide integrated family support services that build upon existing community resources and linkages with public schools. Community members can serve as volunteers, role models and mentors, providing more individualized attention for students and demonstrating to both children and staff members that others in their community support education. Businesses can sponsor school-family-community partnership activities and encourage their employees to play an active role in education.

### State Department of Education Leadership

The State Board of Education believes that the State Department of Education must provide leadership in developing and promoting comprehensive school-family-community partnership programs and activities that contribute to success for *all* students. The Department's leadership role includes supporting the standards for comprehensive school-family-community partnerships described above; promoting linkages among state- and local-level partners; and collecting and disseminating information about current research and best practice.